Rome Jan^{y} 14th 1873

My dear Charley

As I have just had a letter from Maria telling me that she had received the £10 from my son Walter; so I will ask you to explain that I write to you instead of her as I owe you a letter & that you will send this to her

I am glad to assure you that I am much better tho not quite set up; for the fever has stuck to me like a creditor & I have had to take loads of Quinine which I am disposed to think is doing me good in the long run; also as we have very fine weather I am able to get out daily

My housekeeping is prospering, as Dr Valeriani & his wife & sister are really good people & are a great comfort to me, I enjoy their company, we sit down 4 to dinner & they are very kind & attentive

Maria desires to know about my Xmas & she'll be amused to know that my Xmas dinner consisted in an ounce of Castor oil!! but I've picked up since Jan^{y} 16

Many pleasant things for dear Maria - I have just got a letter from my youngest Son Gerald

offering to pay the pension so that poor
Maria will be quite independant of me &all
that may occur to me at my great age, for it
distressed me that if I were to be taken off
my poor Sister would be almost destitute
& so now I am tranquil on this point as the
£40 will be always paid by my good Children
I know this will be a great comfort to poor
dear Maria for the rest of her life

What I suffer most is great coldness in
my hands my fingers at times are frozen but the
Doctor has suggested a bath of hot olive oil &
already I derive great benefit from it

I will not complain for at my age so
many drawbacks come on & which I do not
yet suffer, I treat myself as in my actual old age &
to escape many inconveniences, fortunately
I have no need to expose myself to night air
or cold, or hard exercise but I can afford
to sink down into the tranquil life, I am
fortunate in an excellent woman servant
who is devoted to me & is always looking

looking after me — my friends D. Valeriani & his two ladies are also devoted to me so that I am really very comfortable

My house in its great extent is also settling down to a reasonable state of things — my great Salon is taken for 3 years by the Philodramatic society & a theatre is about to be built in it they pay 3 quarters of the rent so that I state an almost rent free, indeed I have every thing to make me comfortable in my coming great age, including complete good health & even good looks, for I am still taken for my son

I regretted much that your f. M. Rutt could only stay so short a time for I was ill at the time & was not able to show him any attention such as he & his f. merited

We have the most beautiful weather which helps to set me up in health as I am able to go out in it every day & I am so glad that I am able to write you this good account as I know it will make you all happy as I love to know the great love

So you see I shall have the delights of a Theatre in my own house!! which as I am so fond of the Drama will indeed be a delight — then my having a capital Doctor always at my elbow, "cosa volete piu di Dio"

Feb 21 My Son in law Charles Newton has just come here on his way to Smyrna where he is excavating — he tells me that poor Claudia is a mere shadow. — That the Bride Joan will be likely to get the great fortune of Mr Ruskin her guardian

I fear in this dreadful weather & the high price of coal you'll be suffering tho I trust you have received the £10 from Walter & Arthur & you'll write me of it — The cold upsets me & my hands suffer but I get on I'm going on well — The Society have had a great Ball in my rooms & all is well arranged cent per cent

A Newspaper account of me is going to Tom, tho it makes me out 81 — The Carnival is going on with great glee, but I keep out of it

I enclose you a 6d Queens head so do write for I get obtained about your loving brother Joe